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(WASHINGTON, D.C.) -- Congressman Russ Carnahan one of the founding members of the MS (Multiple Sclerosis) Caucus, is pleased to announce that more than a hundred members have signed onto the group since its inception last year.

"It was a privilege to establish the MS Congressional Caucus along with my colleague Dr. Michael Burgess of Texas. I'm pleased to announce the Caucus now has surpassed 100 Members of Congress", said Carnahan.

"A member of my staff inspired me to get more involved with fighting MS, and I am encouraged to see other Members of Congress are making it a priority as well," said Congressman Michael C. Burgess, M.D.

Last year, the Defense Appropriations bill made MS eligible for research dollars under the Peer Reviewed Medical Research Programs for the first time ever. While this was an important step, Congressman Carnahan and his colleagues believe that a specific program for MS research should be designated under the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP).

Congressman Carnahan led the effort to request \$15 million for MS research at the CDMRP again this year. A multi-Member letter of support was submitted to the Appropriations Committee with 63 signatories earlier this year.

Carnahan became familiar with MS after a family member was inflicted with the disease and was encouraged to become more involved in combating the disease by the active Gateway Area Chapter of the National MS Society.

Congressman Carnahan along with co-founder Burgess earlier introduced the "National MS Disease Registry Act" to establish a MS National Surveillance System.

Every hour in the United States, someone is newly diagnosed with MS. It is a chronic, unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system and is generally diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, the prime of life. The cause is still unknown and there is no cure. Symptoms vary from person to person and from day to day in the same person. One person might experience abnormal fatigue and numbness. Another person could have difficulty walking, slurred speech, or bladder problems. People who live with severe MS have permanent symptoms, including paralysis and difficulties with vision or cognition. Some FDA-approved treatments are available, but they are very expensive and only slow the progression of the disease. Current medical treatments are not effective for many people and cannot be tolerated by many others.

Carnahan was named the 2007 “Representative of the Year” by the National MS Society earlier this year. This is the highest honor the Society awards to public officials.